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"ABRAHAM LINCOLN -THE MAN."

RESPONSE

OF

HON. WILLIAM SULZER,
OF NEW YORK,

To the Trustees of the Board of the
Lincoln Association of Jersey City,
New Jersey.

TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 12, 1907.

Presented officially to the Board of the
Lincoln Association of Jersey City,
at the Board of Directors, February 27, 1907.



WASHINGTON,
1907.

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RESPONSE OF HON. WILLIAM SULZER.

To the toast "Abraham Lincoln—the Man," at the banquet of the Lincoln Association, of Jersey City, N. J. —

MR. SULZER said:

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN: This is Lincoln's birthday, and we are met to honor his memory.

It is a matter of much personal gratification for me to be with you to-night. The hospitality of the Lincoln Association, of Jersey City, in the grand old Commonwealth of New Jersey, is famous from one end of the country to the other; and justly so, because your association rises above creed and condition and race and prejudice and stands for the toast assigned to me—"Abraham Lincoln—the Man," and the eternal principles of liberty, justice, and humanity, that must ever be dear to every heart that believes in the greatness and the grandeur of our first martyred President.

I am glad to see so many here to-night—so many distinguished gentlemen, so many eloquent speakers, and I am glad to pay my tribute to your association—the only Lincoln Association in all the land that has never failed, year in and year out, for nearly half a century, to fittingly celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln—and to say that you are to be commended and congratulated for all you have done in the past, for all you are doing now, and for all you will continue to do in the future to make the name of "Lincoln—the Man" shine resplendent with the immortals of all time in all the centuries yet to come.

His name, reaching down through the age of time,
Will still through the age of eternity shine —
Like a star, sailing on through the depths of the deep,
On whose brightness we gaze every evening anew.

Let me say, Mr. President, that Lincoln has ever been my ideal of a man—a great man. I have been a believer in and an admirer of Abraham Lincoln ever since early boyhood days. I have studied his speeches, read and reread his writings, worshipped at his shrine, gloried in his career, and have always been a close student of his wise and just and patriotic teachings. He was, in my opinion, take him all in all, the most heroic figure in all our history, and next to the Declaration of Independence, he wrote the greatest political document in our annals—the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the words of John Stuart Mill, "Abraham Lincoln was the kind of a man Carlyle in his better days taught us to worship as a hero." And as the years come and go he will be wor-

Abraham Lincoln believed in exact justice to all men. He was the incarnation of democracy. He was no respecter of persons, of conditions, or of power. He cared nothing for position and less for wealth. He believed in and enunciated the great cardinal principle of Jefferson—"Equal rights to all; special privileges to none."

He was a great confederer; he gloried in the Declaration of Independence; he believed in its principles, and he honored and revered its immortal author. In speaking of Jefferson in 1861, Mr. Lincoln said:

All honor to Jefferson; to a man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times; and so to enshrine it there, and to-day and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression!

In my opinion no higher tribute was ever paid to the author of the Declaration of Independence. All honor to the memory of Jefferson! All honor to the memory of Lincoln! The two great American immortals.

When I was in the legislature of the State of New York, I asked the late Senator Donald McNaughten, the representative from Rochester, who knew Lincoln well, and who frequently met him in the trying days of the civil war, "Who, in your opinion, was the greatest politician and statesman that America has ever produced?" and the wise old Scotch senator, without a moment's hesitation, replied, "Lincoln." And then after a few moments of quiet thought he said:

My young friend, if you want to become a real man and a leader in the American Republic, study and emulate the life of Abraham Lincoln.

From his earliest youth to the sadness of his tragical dying day Abraham Lincoln was always true to the promptings of his heart, true to his principles, and they were the principles of humanity, the principles of liberty, and the principle of a free government. He was always true to his political faith, true to the fundamental teachings of the fathers of the Republic, true to the men who were striving to do right. In one of his speeches he said:

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to do up every right I have. I must stand with everybody that stands right; stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

What a noble sentiment!

Lincoln was a great lawyer. In his own way probably one of the greatest lawyers that ever lived in America. He was a great orator, and his simple speech at Gettysburg is one of the great classics of America; and his innumerable speeches, especially his wonderful debates with Douglas, conclusively prove that he was one of our greatest orators.

He was a man of quaint humor, of much sorrow, of infinite jest, of much common sense, and he searched and knew the human heart. He had faith that right makes might, and in the light of that faith he dared to the end to do his duty as he saw it.

He was a simple man—simple in his strength and in his greatness. In moments of repose he was sad and reflective. His

sympathy was with the poor and the lowly—with the sorrowing. His great heart went out to those who struggle and fail. He was always the same, yet ever different—like the waters of the sea—but he remembered, as he said in his first speech, that he was "humble Abraham Lincoln."

He was a great statesman, and no one to-day, reading his letters and his state papers, can doubt for a moment that he was the ablest and the most farseeing politician of his time, and the greatest and grandest statesman this country has ever produced.

Lincoln stands alone in the illumined pages of American history—the greatest and the grandest and the most colossal figure in all our annals.

No one will ever know the blood drops and the suffering of Abraham Lincoln during the darkest and most trying days of the civil war, the greatest war of modern times, when a million men from the North and a million men from the South, with their guns and drums, and their tramping to and fro, met in the shock of battle, shook the earth, and the very pillars of our free institutions. Thank God, father Abraham won, and we are brothers again.

In this connection I want to tell a story, that perhaps has never been printed before, regarding Mr. Lincoln's sadness and greatness, and dry wit and inimitable humor, and in this composition there was much of all these elements. In the early days of the war for the Union a great body of leading bankers and financiers of New York called at the White House to see Mr. Lincoln, and asked him to send ships and troops to New York to protect their treasures. Mr. Lincoln listened patiently to all this committee had to say, and when they finished he said, in his quiet, sad, and simple way:

Gentlemen, in answer to all you have said, I reply that I am doing everything in my power with the forces at my command to save the Union. There is no danger to your treasures in New York City, and instead of asking me to send war ships and troops to New York to protect them, you should go back home and lend your money to the Government and help save the Union.

The great committee of bankers and financiers returned to New York, wiser and more patriotic men from these few words of the immortal martyred President.

Lincoln loved the Union, and his first inaugural message proves that his only desire was to save the Union from civil strife and dissolution. He had said many times before that a house divided against itself can not stand, and Lincoln was right.

When Doctrin Long, an intimate friend of Lincoln, said to him one day, "Well, Lincoln, that foolish speech will kill you—you will defeat you for all office—for all time to come," referring to the "house divided" speech, Mr. Lincoln replied:

If I had to draw a pen across and erase my whole life from existence, and I had one poor gift or choice left, as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech, and leave it to the world unmarred.

He was the friend of the toiler—of the producer—of the great army of men who earn their bread in the sweat of their face. In his message to Congress in December, 1861, he said:

Let no man be proud and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the power of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. No man having any more worth to be trusted than those who toil for their poverty, is more inclined to take or withhold which they are not lawfully earned.

Lincoln died in the prime of his life, at the summit of his career, in the zenith of his force, in the service of his country, loved by every friend of man, and mourned by all the world.

There is a reaper whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen
He reaps the banded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

But the reaper can never rob humanity of the unity her faith in Abraham Lincoln. As my friend Col. Henry Ware wrote his son, most truly and eloquently said:

A thousand years hence no story, no legend, no song, no poem will be filled with brighter wonder or be read with greater delight than that which tells of His life and death.

Lincoln was indeed a man, the man of whose life we shall not look again; and the loss of all his eyes, the effort of man—the greatest agonies of human life—his death was ever seen.

[illegible]

But Lincoln needs no more than to ask himself how he would like to live; he will live for God. His countrymen and his people will live in the hearts of the people of the world, and his generations will arise to call him blessed. The world will be the better for their consecrated life.

Frederick Lincoln was perhaps the noblest and noblest of men during the time he was in the Valley of the Shenandoah. A man that ever lived in our country, and that ever lived, was stricken down by the cruel bullet of a traitor, and he left all the world bowed down and weeping, and the people of this earth paid tribute to his noble life and noble death. Tribute to his deeds and works and words and noble life and noble death.

No paper in all the world did I like better than the paper of London, and yet, upon the death of Miss Bulwer, I saw the most beautiful tributes that ever was written, and the most of man, and James Russell Lowell, one of America's greatest poets, summed it all up in a stanza in his *Centennial*, and so I wish he said of the melting name of Ellsford:

Great captains, with their general direction, directed the work of the
the hour:

But at least silver's reserves, the supply, are vast:

But at last silence comes, the stillness of death;
And standing like a tower, our dead hero holds the glory
Of his fame.

This kindly, earnest, brave & useful man

This kindly, efficient, middle-aged, single, white male, 36 years of age, was a patient, dropping out of the study because of a lack of interest in the study.

New birth of our new soil- the first American.



